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# Currys' gift bolsters Tocqueville program

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## Hanks, Kilstofte receive first Furman Standard awards

**THE BOND** between professor and student is one of the hallmarks of a Furman education. It's that bit of magic that lends itself to creative expression, career paths defined, and dreams revealed.

The Furman Standard, established in 2010 to support faculty development at Furman, pays tribute to those professors who set the standard for teaching excellence. Since the program's founding, 28 professors past and present have been honored with gifts of \$25,000 or more from alumni and parents.

As a result, the Furman Standard recently announced the first two faculty recipients of research grants. Chemistry professor Tim Hanks (left) and music professor Mark Kilstofte were selected to receive \$9,000 awards (\$3,000 for three consecutive years) by the faculty's Research and Professional Growth Committee. Two new recipients will be selected each year.

Hanks' award will fund his research into anti-corrosion and anti-biofouling coatings for marine environments. His work centers on organisms such as algae, barnacles and mollusks, which form on surfaces in marine environments. This "fouling community" often negatively affects the performances of things like aircraft carriers and power plant cooling systems. The traditional method for counteracting this problem is to coat surfaces with paints containing toxic tin and copper complexes that erode and release toxins into the water. Working with colleagues in Australia and with his student research team, Hanks is attempting to develop an alternative coating that will be more environmentally friendly.

Kilstofte, an accomplished composer, will use his Furman Standard grant to support work on an opera based on Henrik Ibsen's *Brand*, which Kilstofte says is "the story of a passionate, well-intentioned priest brought to ruin (or cataclysmic redemption) by his uncompromising beliefs."

Kilstofte, who also was recently awarded a Fulbright grant, plans to complete a three-act libretto, develop the work's principal dramatic arc and a series of character studies, compose the score, and orchestrate the piece. He says, "A work of this scale, my most ambitious to date, will demand the synthesis of everything I know about writing for voices and instruments, and about projecting dramatic shape. I'm grateful for the support that will enable me to pursue it."

To learn more, contact [shon.herrick@furman.edu](mailto:shon.herrick@furman.edu) or visit [becausefurmanmatters.com](http://becausefurmanmatters.com). Stories on these pages by Kate Hofler Dabbs '09. Photos by Jeremy Fleming.

## Currys' gift bolsters Tocqueville program

**THE TOCQUEVILLE PROGRAM** at Furman promotes the continuing relevance of Western and American political thought, attracts some of the nation's most prominent scholars to campus, and sponsors a popular student seminar in political thought.

Now, thanks to a \$500,000 gift from Ravenel Curry '63 and his wife, Beth, the program has a firm economic foundation on which to build and grow. "This pledge allows us to turn our efforts to an ambitious project of expanding the number of courses offered by the program," says Ty Tessitore, professor of political science who, with departmental colleague Ben Storey, is the program's co-director.

The program, which began in 2008, takes its name from Alexis de Tocqueville, the French writer and statesman who visited America in the 1830s to study and write about the young nation's experiment with democracy. It was developed, according to the directors, "in response to the growing civic and cultural illiteracy of students and the creeping ideological conformity that pervades faculty and students alike."

In a recent article on the John William Pope Center for Higher Education Policy website, the program was lauded as a "model" of intellectual rigor and was compared favorably to similar programs at Duke and Princeton. In 2010, student demand was such that it was necessary to double the space available in the course. Tocqueville Lecture Series speakers have included such scholars as Francis Fukuyama (Johns Hopkins), Lee Silver (Princeton) and Martha Nussbaum (University of Chicago).

"We consider the Tocqueville Program to be the beginning of a much broader effort to invigorate the teaching of the liberal arts at Furman," says Storey.